

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT NEW YORK

FILE NO. 97-38

REPORT MADE AT WASHINGTON, D. C.	DATE WHEN MADE 10-23-40	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 9-17, 21, 22, 24, 26, 30 & 10-1, 9 and 10/40	REPORT MADE BY N. D. VALENTINE NDV:LEW
TITLE LAWRENCE DENNIS alias LONNIE LAWRENCE DENNIS WEEKLY FOREIGN LETTER		CHARACTER OF CASE REGISTRATION ACT	
<p>SYNOPSIS OF FACTS: Subject not registered as Agent for Foreign Principals. Claims birth Atlanta, Georgia, December 25, 1893. Early history obscure. Is adopted son and possibly of negro blood. Attended Harvard University. In U. S. Army from August 15, 1917 to August 2, 1919; discharged as First Lieutenant. Employed State Department October 1, 1920 to June 15, 1927, resigning with bitterness. Employed E. A. Seligman Company and E. A. Pearce Company, New York. Excellent linguistic ability opinionated and powerful personality. Controls "Weekly Foreign Letter" which is strongly anti-British and pro-Nazi. This publication re-distributed in South America. Corresponds with German and Japanese Agencies for German Nationals.</p> <p>ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED DATE 2-6-98 BY SP3B1/4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- P -</p>			
APPROVED AND FORWARDED <i>[Signature]</i>	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE <i>[Signature]</i>	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES 97-218-10	
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 6 - Bureau 2 - New York 3 - Boston 2 - Atlanta 2 - Washington Field		<p>OCT 29 1940</p> <p>OCT 25 A.M.</p> <p>FIVE</p> <p>HARBO</p>	

REFERENCE: Letter to New York Office dated August 27, 1940.

DETAILS: AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

At the Department of State, Mr. E. D. KUPPINGER, Controls Division, advised that a check of the records indicated this subject was not registered as an Agent for a Foreign Principal.

Confidential Informant A stated that the personnel record of subject was defective in that it does not include any natal data. However, he stated according to the files that subject under the name of LAWRENCE DENNIS claimed to have attended Phillips Andover Academy from 1913 to 1915 and to have received a degree of A. B. from Harvard University in 1919. He enlisted in the U. S. Army August 15, 1917 as Second Lieutenant, was promoted to First Lieutenant March 12, 1919, and served overseas until August 2, 1919, at which time he was discharged.

He was employed as a clerk by the State Department on October 1, 1920 and given a special examination in the Diplomatic Service and appointed to this service August 24, 1921. All his posts except service in Roumania were in Latin America. Confidential Informant A stated that subject resigned with bitterness and a great row ensued at the time. He recalled subject as a person with a very powerful personality, dogmatic, curt, over-asserted and over emphatic. He is very opinionated and possesses great linguistic ability. He resigned June 15, 1927.

A check of the records further reflected that subject claimed to have been born in Atlanta, Georgia, December 25, 1893. Confidential Informant A further stated that the subject in his opinion would say his thoughts regardless of who he offended and that his present writings express his temperament. He was of the opinion that the subject was not an Agent for Foreign Principals but was merely expressing his ideas.

Confidential Informant B produced a file on DENNIS and he stated that LAWRENCE DENNIS when serving in Nicaragua, had disagreed with the Department of State on a political matter. The Department of State later found that he was correct in his opinion. DENNIS, however, was so angry that he resigned. From what the Department of State has learned, DENNIS has become very pro-HITLER and visits Washington often, but there is no indication insofar as the Department of State knows, that DENNIS is receiving money as an Agent for a Foreign Power.

The file produced by Confidential Informant B contained a letter from the Ambassador of the United States at Rio de Janeiro, enclosing a mimeographed "Letter" which was sent out by DENNIS and which is anti-British and isolationist. The Ambassador stated that this mimeographed letter was reprinted and widely distributed in Rio de Janeiro. The United States Embassy at that point assumes that it was forwarded to the German Embassy or to the interocean service from which points it was reprinted for local distribution in South America.

This file contained a report from the Post Office Department in New York City, which had at the request of the State Department, investigated for the purpose of obtaining information concerning LAWRENCE DENNIS of 575 Madison Avenue, New York. The Post Office report of June 14, 1940 set out that the trade name, "The Weekly Foreign Letter" was registered in New York on February 14, 1939 by VLADIMAR D. GRAVENHOFF and LAWRENCE DENNIS, who occupied room 2303 at the above address.

This report continued to state that GRAVENHOFF was in the employ of STOKES HOYT and Company, Stock Brokers of 61 Broadway, New York, and DENNIS was recently in the employ of E. A. PEARCE and Company of 40 Wall Street. DENNIS, however, is now engaged exclusively on the preparation and sale of his "Letter" which is supposed to be a review of foreign affairs.

It appears that GRAVENHOFF and another Russian, ALEXANDER T. NAZAROFF, originally filed a certificate with the New York County Clerk to publish a "Review on Foreign Affairs" but NAZAROFF was "frozen out" when GRAVENHOFF took DENNIS into the partnership. On March 8, 1940, the subject is said to have filed a certificate

as sole successor to the "Weekly Foreign Letter". It was thought that the two Russians were not frozen out but rather "eased out" of their own accord.

DENNIS's residence was listed as 420 Warwick Avenue, West Englewood, New Jersey. GRAVENHOFF resided at 356 E. 57th Street, New York City, and NAZAROFF at 437 E. 58th Street, New York City. The Post Office placed a mail cover on the business address and also on the residences described above. Among the persons or firms sending mail to these addresses and which appear to be of interest are the following:

X Patterson Michahelles and Co., Ltd.
Rou - New York City.

MARINK VEIGA

#8

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - Inquiry at the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign Commerce, revealed that this firm handles German products in that locality.

X NITSUEISKI

Shoji Kaisha Sta.

120 Broadway, New York - This correspondence was addressed to V. D. Gravenhoff, in care of the "Weekly Foreign Letter", June 17, 1940.

X Japanese American Review
216 E. 45th Street
New York City

TH. VON KNAAP

Room 1926

17 Battery Place, New York

X Staudt y Cia S.A.C.

Buenos Aires, Argentine - This letter was addressed to LAWRENCE DENNIS at the Department of Commerce, Bureau of

Foreign Commerce. It was discovered that this firm was on the black list of the British during the last war and are believed to be exporters of Argentine products.

✓ JUNCAL - 1044
Buenos Aires
Argentine

✓ The German Library of Information
Room 1923
17 Battery Place, New York

✓ Italian Library of Information
595 Madison Avenue
New York

✓ Shaw Strupp y Cia
Buenos Aires

✓ Interocean News
341 Madison Avenue
New York City

- This is said to be a Nazi controlled outfit and this letter was addressed to the home address of LAWRENCE DENNIS.

✓ B. F. STEVENS and BROWN, Ltd.
28-30 Little Russell Street
London, England

✓ G. W. GROOS
P. O. Box 5067
Christobel, Canal Zone

- This letter dated July 8, 1940, was addressed to LAWRENCE DENNIS.

The file showed that G-2 advised the Department of State to the effect that GROOS is ~~DISPERT WILHELM~~ GROOS who was apprehended by military authorities in the Canal Zone, October 16, 1938

in company with ~~INGEBORG GUTMAN~~, ~~HANS SCHACKOW~~ and ~~ERNEST ROBERT KUHRIG~~, who were taking photographs in a restricted area at ~~Fort Randolph~~, Canal Zone. ~~SCHACKOW~~ and ~~KUHRIG~~ were convicted under the Espionage Act and sentenced to two years in the penitentiary. ~~GROOS~~ and ~~GUTMAN~~ were released March 4, 1939 because of lack of evidence against them.

~~GROOS~~ is an employee of the German Hamburg Line, Christobel, Canal Zone, and his father was a Vice Admiral in the German Navy in 1939, and on the last report that G-2 had, ~~GROOS~~ and eight other Germans were en route to Chile in January of 1940. It would appear then, that ~~GROOS~~ has returned to the Canal Zone.

~~HAPOG-LLOYD~~

Panama Canal Agency
Christobel, Canal Zone

~~PRINCE KYRIL SCHERFATON~~

166 E. 63rd Street, New York

The Post Office Department's report continued to include a statement that the ~~New York World Telegram~~ on January 8, 1940 carried an article by ~~GEORGE CRITT~~, Staff Writer, relative to Fifth Column activities in the United States. It mentioned that ~~DENNIS~~ contributed to three issues of "Today's Challenge" published by Dr. ~~FRIEDRICH E. AUBAGEN~~, and an important worker for ~~HITLER~~ in America.

The State Department file contained a copy of a letter dated July 8, 1940 written by Confidential Informant C to the American Consul General to check on the Buenos Aires correspondence of ~~DENNIS~~ as set forth in the mail cover results. At the time of the dictating of this report no reply had been received.

Agent interviewed Confidential Informant C who stated that he attended Harvard University with ~~DENNIS~~ in 1914 and was with him on the debating team. He said ~~DENNIS~~ had been appointed to the Diplomatic Service and served in Roumania and Latin America and that he was able and very tactful. However, in 1920 in Nicaragua, ~~DENNIS~~ disagreed with this Government's policy of intervention in Central America. It developed that he was correct but for some reason he

resigned and wrote articles in magazines. He next obtained a position with E. L. SELIGMAN in New York, Brokers. He was sent to South America to analyze and report on Latin American loans. In 1928 this company was considering underwriting a one hundred million dollar loan to Peru, but DENNIS's report said that the loan could not be repaid and that the loan would be defaulted. His company, however, did not heed his findings, and at a meeting requested him to change his report so as to permit the issuance of the bonds. He refused to do so and resigned. It developed that the loans were made and defaulted and that by this time DENNIS had become very embittered.

In 1929 and 1930 DENNIS testified before the Senate Committee about the time the Johnson Act relative to foreign loans went into effect. DENNIS testified against the bankers and the government in-so-far as its policy was concerned.

Confidential Informant C continued to say that DENNIS had an intellectual interest in Fascism and claimed to be the head of a small group who were also interested in this movement. This was a long time before HITLER's advent into power. DENNIS wrote books on this subject. Subsequently, DENNIS married and Confidential Informant C believed that he purchased a farm near Ashfield in Western Massachusetts, and he had no trace of him or heard further from him until he started the "Weekly Foreign Letter", which is discussed in this case. DENNIS has apparently at this time gone straight Fascist and expounds Fascism. However, he does not believe that there is any indication that DENNIS is receiving money from foreign powers, but that the letters do circulate widely and are re-circulated in South America.

Confidential Informant S-1, in going further into this matter and the files of the State Department, discovered that DENNIS whenever he would visit Washington while in the Diplomatic Service, would at no time give an address on registering, but did once mention as his nearest relative Mrs. C. G. DENNIS, Post Office Box 3122, Washington, D. C.

Confidential Informant S-1 also ascertained that one of the endorsers for admitting DENNIS to the Career Service was BAILLY-BLANCHARD who died August 24, 1925 and who resided in Washington, but was formerly from New Orleans.

It was also developed that DENNIS asked for and received as his first post as a clerk a position in Port Au Prince, Haiti.

Confidential Informant S-2 in the office of Confidential Informant S-1, was formerly Commercial Attache with the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, U. S. Department of Commerce, and knew DENNIS in Bucharest when DENNIS was attached to that legation. Confidential Informant S-2 always thought or suspected that DENNIS was colored. The question of colored blood, in the opinion of Confidential Informant S-1, warrants a thorough checking into this matter, inasmuch as if he is an Agent of a Foreign Country, the motive might well be that DENNIS as a negro felt that an injustice has been done to him and has sold out.

arm At the War Department, Adjutant General's Office, the records in Building E were examined. It was found that DENNIS enlisted May 14, 1917 in the First Reserve Officers' Training Camp at Plattsburg, New York and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Reserve, August 15, 1917. He was assigned to duty and on March 30, 1918 sailed overseas in the office of the Provost Marshal, Division of Criminal Investigation. He was discharged as a First Lieutenant on March 26, 1919. He was honorably discharged at Gievres, France, August 2, 1919.

The records show that DENNIS was born December 25, 1893 at Atlanta, Georgia and his mother was Mrs. CORNELIA DENNIS, 1841 Vernon Street, Washington, D. C.

Contained in this file was a letter dated June 24, 1923 from the subject who was then attached to the American Legation, Bucharest, Roumania, to the War Department. It appears that DENNIS in 1920 had applied for reappointment in the Officers Reserve Corps and had not received favorable action. He therefore transmitted this letter and outlined his military service, saying that he had entered Plattsburg from Harvard and had been sent to Camp Devons, Massachusetts. At Camp Devons he claimed to have fallen into disfavor with his captain and certain other reserve officers for various reasons which he did not outline. He continued to say that in his duties in Brest, France, he was patrol officer, a prison officer and general liaison officer between the Provost Marshal's office and the French authorities

because of his speaking knowledge of the French language. It was noted that in his official qualification card he stated that he could carry on a conversation in French and in German.

Further as to his personal history, he said his father was born in Raleigh, North Carolina and his mother was born in Atlanta, Georgia.

He was considered very clever and did excellent work with the Military Police in France. On June 18, 1919 he applied for a discharge in France because he intended to live in that country and had an income from real estate in the United States and intended to go into business in Paris. Consequently, on August 2, 1919 he was discharged. It is interesting to note for reasons which are later brought out, that in the file there was contained data revealing that he had forwarded his trunk to this country addressed to one MICK MITCHELL. In October, 1919 he returned to the United States.

colored
With reference to the above mentioned trouble which he claimed to have had at Camp Devons, the file reflected that he was tried at Camp Devons on a charge of inefficiency and inability to command men; specifically that he did not perform his duties in the proper manner. It developed, however, that the other officers did not associate or run around with him and it was brought out that he was thought to be partly colored by reason of his complexion and features. However, the board recommended that he be retained in the service and remarked that there was a strong current of feeling against DENNIS because of the idea that he had negro blood in him. The board recommended he be transferred and consequently he was transferred to the Provost Marshal's Division.

At Stone's Mercantile Agency, there was very little concerning this individual. However, a credit report dated March 16, 1936, reflected that LAWRENCE DENNIS resided at Bechet, Massachusetts. This is probably intended to be Becket, Massachusetts. It concerned some real estate at 1841 Vernon Street which was in the name of LAWRENCE DENNIS and was acquired by deed by him on March 30, 1934. His mother was set out to be Mrs. CORNELIA B. DENNIS, widow of J. G. DENNIS, now deceased. There was no other credit information concerning him. However, the records do contain information relative to the transfer of real estate.

Among other things, it showed that this property was deeded on September 20, 1918 from CORNELIA DENNIS to LAWRENCE DENNIS. On September 21, 1933 LAWRENCE DENNIS deeded this real estate to MICK MITCHELL. On March 30, 1934, ELMIRA MITCHELL was shown to have conveyed the property back to LAWRENCE DENNIS.

With reference to MICK MITCHELL, who it will be recalled was the addressee on the subject's trunk when he sent it from France, the credit report showed he was colored and died in February, 1934 at the age of 64. He had been a clerk in the Pension Office since October 26, 1891.

At the Register of Wills, the records were examined concerning the death and administration of the estate of MICK MITCHELL but nowhere was the name of MITCHELL mentioned. An investigation shows that 1841 Vernon Street is 100% colored and has been so for a number of years. This address, which is held in the name of LAWRENCE DENNIS, according to the present tenant is owned by Mrs. MITCHELL. This tenant, however, has only been in this place for a month and knows nothing concerning the DENNIS family.

At 1839 Vernon Street, Mrs. B. G. M. ROBINSON, colored, the widow of Dr. ROBINSON, has been there for several years and knew the DENNIS family well. She stated Mrs. DENNIS lived there alone and died about 1934. ELMIRA MITCHELL, the wife of MICK, was with Mrs. DENNIS at the time of her death. MICK MITCHELL used to handle the property for Mrs. DENNIS, make the repairs, collect the rents, etc. It appeared that Mrs. DENNIS rented out the first floor of this two story brick duplex house. It was stated that the MITCHELL's and Mrs. DENNIS were not related.

Mr. S. MINDEL, a tailor at 1802 Vernon Street, has been at this address 19 years. He could not clearly recall Mrs. DENNIS but does recall LAWRENCE DENNIS who lived in that neighborhood. He said at one time he asked LAWRENCE DENNIS if he was colored and he replied, "what do you think?" He said he could easily pass for white and mixed with white people, but he thought DENNIS was colored because colored people lived in the house where he resided.

Mr. MINDEL later recalled a BILL HARRISON who was in the

numbers racket and whose wife was a school teacher. Mr. MINDEL stated that HARRISON used to go around with LAWRENCE DENNIS a great deal and could probably furnish information concerning DENNIS. HARRISON resides at 1704 T Street, Apartment 25 with his wife, MADELINE, who is a school teacher, according to the city directory.

At the Bureau of Vital Statistics, District Building, examination of the records failed to show any record of the death of CORNELIA DENNIS.

At the Congressional Library, the City Directories for the District of Columbia were examined since 1900 to date. The first time a DENNIS is listed as residing at 1841 Vernon Street, N. W., was in 1911 and the person was listed as CAROLINE DENNIS, Evangelist, and underneath LARNE DENNIS, Evangelist. This was carried similarly in 1912. However, in 1913 the only name listed was LAWRENCE DENNIS. The 1914 listing was CORNELIA G. (widow of GREEN), and LAWRENCE W. - boards.

It is believed that CORNELIA DENNIS and CAROLINE DENNIS are the same individual. LAWRENCE W. DENNIS was listed also for the years 1915 and 1916, together with CORNELIA. From 1917 until 1934 the only listing at this address is Mrs. CORNELIA DENNIS. However, in checking the street list of the city directory subsequent to the years 1919, it was reflected that there was also listed at the address 1841 Vernon Street, persons who were colored; for instance the name JOSEPH A. McDUFFIE, a physician, was noted in the directory as a colored person.

At the address 1845 Vernon Street, in the years 1916 through 1919, there was listed Mrs. BRIDGETT CORCORAN and also ELIZABETH C. CORCORAN. ELIZABETH C. CORCORAN was located as residing at 3311 Fessenden Street, Washington, and was interviewed at her position with the Register's Office, U. S. Treasury Department.

Miss CORCORAN stated that she did not recall the name of the persons living at 1841 Vernon Street but did know that these people were the only colored people in the block and that during the three years she lived there only colored people lived there.

At the Register of Deeds for the District of Columbia there was found an entry in book #3351, folio 210, dated August 2, 1910, reciting that A. EMERSON BABCOCK and BLANCH S. BABCOCK, his wife, of Rochester, New York, deeded for \$10.00 to CORNELIA DENNIS and LONNIE LAWRENCE DENNIS, joint tenants, certain property as described therein.

Book #4121, folio 76, recited the conveyance from CORNELIA DENNIS to LAWRENCE DENNIS of property. It was recorded September 20, 1918. This deed recited that CORNELIA DENNIS of Washington, D. C., widow of GREEN DENNIS, late, of Fulton County, Georgia, deeds to LAWRENCE DENNIS, identical with LONNIE LAWRENCE DENNIS, adopted son of said CORNELIA DENNIS, certain properties as described therein. This was notarized and signed by CORNELIA DENNIS in Jefferson County, West Virginia before Natary Public D. H. NICHOLS.

On October 9, 1940 Mr. FLETCHER WARREN suggested that contact be made with Dr. G. ELLIS WILLIAMS, Lincoln 7885, who would know of a colored minister who might know of the evangelists listed in the city directory as described above.

A check of the records in the office of the U. S. District Court failed to show any adoption record relating to CORNELIA DENNIS and LONNIE LAWRENCE DENNIS prior to the year 1928.

UNDEVELOPED LEADS

THE NEW YORK FIELD DIVISION


AT NEW YORK, N. Y.

Will conduct investigation as requested in reference letter.

THE BOSTON FIELD DIVISION

AT BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Will check the marriage records and auto registration and auto drivers' licenses for the years 1928 to 1936 in an effort to determine the residence of LAWRENCE DENNIS.



If such information is obtained, will conduct investigation at that place to develop the personal history of subject, and particularly to ascertain his political tendencies. c

AT CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Will closely check the personnel records of LAWRENCE DENNIS to obtain all personal information concerning him, particularly in natal information. c

AT ANDOVER, MASSACHUSETTS

At Phillips Andover Academy, will conduct similar investigation.

A copy of this report should be forwarded to the Washington Office to assist in further investigation at this point in an effort to ascertain whether or not this subject is colored.

THE ATLANTA FIELD OFFICE

AT ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Will endeavor to locate any adoption record and birth record of LONNIE LAWRENCE DENNIS and if possible to determine the family history of GREEN DENNIS who is supposed to have been late of Fulton County.

THE WASHINGTON FIELD DIVISION

AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

Will interview ELMIRA MITCHELL located in the 1700 Block, T Street, N. W., concerning the background of LAWRENCE DENNIS.

Will similarly interview WILLIAM HURST, 1704 T Street, N. W.

Will interview Dr. G. ELLIS WILLIAMS in an effort to locate a colored physician who might remember whether or not the DENNISES residing at 1849 Vernon Street, Washington, D. C. in 1912 listed as evangelists, were colored.

At G-2 and ONI will check as to whether there is any information concerning subject, VLADIMAR D. GRAVENHOFF and ALEXANDER T. NAZAROFF.

At the Department of State will ascertain whether there is any reply from the letter of the State Department relative to the correspondence of DENNIS as described in the body of this report.

Will check at the Division of Controls for information concerning GRAVENHOFF and NAZAROFF.

At the Veterans Administration will check the personnel record of MICK MITCHELL who had been employed in the Pension Bureau since October, 1891 until 1934.

- PENDING -

2 C.C.'s removed for
Mr. Brandt to return to
Field Office for revised
report.

97-218-10

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 7-6-98 BY SP3 BJS/rw

Carnes